

D284.su **BIRMINGHAM, AL, 7 FEBRUARY 1999**



SOUND Good but soft (i.e. deficient drum-sound).

IMAGE Tonight's camera, in the left balcony, is a good way from the stage. Though zooming smoothly in and out between nice shots of the full band and D head-to-foot, perhaps wisely no lateral movement is attempted - thus not a shake or wobble all evening, no heads or other obstructions either, but also relatively little change of perspective. Film quality is what you'd expect from non-pro gear at high zoom - a bit jaded, not exactly sharp, but okay.



RUNNING TIME 96 minutes. The first half of Serve Somebody (opening song) is played over still pictures. This simple and effective papering device allows the presentation of a complete concert (which this is - no clips or snips) despite some missing video. Why don't we see this more often?

HIGHLIGHTS (1) Love Sick (2) Don't Think Twice (3) Not Fade Away

PERFORMANCE Notice anything odd about those three highlights? What's odd is that all three come in the encore, which, strange as it may seem, is when this previously workaday gig finally, belatedly catches fire. For long spells, tonight's performance is what English football fans might call a Sven: proficient but unexciting - if not somnambulism of D166.su proportions, still definitely *subdued*. But then Love Sick, snarling and edgy, ups the ante and after a heartfelt Don't Think Twice draws a rapturous response that seems to touch D where it matters, the closing Not Fade Away is, at last, a full-throttle, high-octane wonder.

COMMENT D has a creditable history of playing "local" songs - Roving Blade in Belfast, Eileen Aroon in Dublin, Two Soldiers in Boston and SFB Blues in the Bay area for instance - and so again tonight: with Honky Tonk Blues (very forgettably performed) he tips his hat to Alabama-born Hank Williams.



GRACIAS P

STARS Though not the most compelling four around, three wouldn't be right either, so four it is.

